



## Trust Formation in Agri-Food Institutional Support Networks

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**Table 1**

Case studies.

<b>Case Study</b>	<b>Support Actor</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Form of Support</b>	<b>Support Tools</b>	<b>Participants</b>
A	Local Authority	South-East region	Food Business Development Programme	Workshops, one-to-one mentoring, and introductions to external stakeholders	7 no. (2 oils/preserves, 2 meats, 1 baked goods, 1 alcohol, 1 dairy)
B	Regional agency for agriculture and rural affairs	Nation-wide	Regional Development Programme	Marketing and promotional support	14 no. (4 baked goods, 3 oils/preserves, 3 meats, 2 alcohol, 2 dairy)
			Food Business Incubation Centre	Innovation services to support product and process development	9 no. (2 oils/preserves, 4 meats, 2 dairy, 1 alcohol)
C	Regional agency for economic development	Belfast	Innovation Vouchers Programme	Subsidised consultancy scheme in collaboration with educational institutions	10 no. (3 oils/preserves, 4 meats, 2 dairy, 1 alcohol)
			Marketing/sales support	Branding support and networking with potential buyers	5 no. (2 baked goods, 1 oils/preserves, 1 alcohol, 1 dairy)
D	Food Association	Belfast	Marketing and promotional support at firm and wider sectoral level	Brochure, online directory and event management	9 no. (3 baked goods, 3 oils/preserves, 3 alcohol)

**Table 2**

Data collection: The case programmes

<b>Documentary Analysis</b>	<b>Focus Groups (February 2013-November 2014)</b>	<b>Observations (February 2013-November 2014)</b>	<b>Semi-structured interviews (July 2013-July 2015)</b>
Documentary analysis of policies and business support programmes in Northern Ireland relevant to the needs of artisan food producers.	Nine focus groups with producers and thirteen with business support actors to explore the nature of engagement in business support and the barriers to engagement in support.	Observations conducted at seven events including five local council business support workshops, an economic policy development event, and a small business network event.	Interviews with twenty producers (eight baked goods, three alcohol, three meats, three oils/preserves, two dairy, one confectionary).
The documentary analysis allowed a mapping of current business support for artisan food producers, the identification of key business support actors for data collection, and the identification of areas for questioning and probing with the respondents.		<p>The observations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>informal discussions between the researchers and producers and actors</li> <li>observation of peer dynamics and interactions within a food network environment.</li> </ul>	<p>Interviews with seven business support actors:</p> <p>Case A: two business support actors (one consultant, one programme manager).</p> <p>Case B: two business support actors (one policy advisor, one head of technology development).</p> <p>Case C: two business support actors (one client advisor, one policy advisor).</p> <p>Case D: one business support actor (Chief Executive).</p>

**Notes:**

Producer respondents had availed of multiple supports across the cases and spoke about their experiences across the forms of support they had engaged in. The interviews with business support actors are shown by case – the interviews were conducted with business actors involved in each of the four cases.

For Case A, interviews and focus groups took place with respondents following completion of the programme (7 of the 21 programme participants and 2 business support actors closely involved in the programme). This allowed for exploration of the nature of trust development between producers and business support actors post programme. The analysis for Case A also involved the study of internal documents provided by a business support actor from the local council responsible for the programme. This provided valuable insights into the programme objectives, content and structure and was used to inform particular areas for probing with respondents during interviews and focus groups.

**Table 3**

Trust components.

<b>Trust component</b>	<b>Case A</b>	<b>Case B</b>	<b>Case C</b>	<b>Case D</b>
Knowledge capabilities (technical and leadership and network connecting capabilities linked to the personal drive of the advisor)	Network building through access to specialist knowledge and the development of peer networks	Network building through use of physical spaces  Advisor championing of project, demonstrating persistence and a long-term commitment	Programmes include scope for collaboration between clients, but support primarily provided on an individual basis (lack of group development)	Little network building activity (network building not within the scope of activities)
			Sub-sector knowledge deficiency	Little access to specialist knowledge
				Focus on sectoral level support (not strongly valued by clients)
	Consistency of advisor	Consistency of advisors	Inconsistency of advisors impacting on knowledge capabilities	Consistency of advisor
	Communicative approach	Communicative approach	Communication issue (lack of client understanding of available support)	Communication issue (lack of client clarity on scope of activities)
Local embeddedness (client identification with advisors through being known locally)	Advisor locally embedded, working closely with clients on a one-to-one basis and in small groups	Advisor locally embedded, working closely with clients on a one-to-one basis and in small groups	Centralised support offerings, not locally embedded (advisor-client disconnect, related to type of support)	Centralised support offerings, not locally embedded (advisor-client disconnect, related to type of support)
	One-to-one and group communication	One-to-one and group communication	Lack of one-to-one communication	Lack of one-to-one communication

Empathy (interpersonal skills, matching of institutional goals with client needs)	Proactive approach	Proactive approach	Reactive approach	Reactive approach
	Strong understanding of client needs (matching of programme content to client needs), based on a communicative approach	Strong understanding of client needs based on a communicative approach	Limited understanding of client needs (focus on large company and export needs) impacted by inconsistency of advisors	Limited understanding of client needs (focus on large company and export needs)
	Emphasis on relationship building, social interactions and sustaining peer support networks	Emphasis on relationship building and facilitating interaction and collaboration between clients	Absence of relationship building	Absence of relationship building
	Strong integrity (matching of institutional goals with client needs and following up on actions)	Strong integrity (matching of institutional goals with client needs and commitment shown to projects)	Weak integrity (matching of institutional goals with client needs)	Weak integrity (matching of institutional goals with client needs)
Perceived trustworthiness	High trust at advisor level (linked to advisor capabilities)	High trust at institutional and advisor levels (linked to institution and advisor capabilities)	Low trust at institutional and advisor levels (lack of client understanding of available support)	Low trust at institutional and advisor levels (lack of client clarity on scope of activities)

**Table 4**

Trust themes.

<b>Trust building approaches</b>	<b>Trust components</b>	<b>Moderators of trust</b>
Network building and access to specialist knowledge	Knowledge capabilities (technical and leadership and network connecting capabilities linked to the personal drive of the advisor)	Communication and Consistency
Championing of project, with a long-term commitment		
One-to-one and group communication	Local embeddedness (client identification with advisors through being known locally)	Communication
Proactive approach	Empathy (strong interpersonal skills, matching of institutional goals with client needs)	Communication, Consistency and Integrity
Emphasis on relationship building and social interactions among peer support networks		
Understanding of client needs		